

Washington, D.C. -- On the issues that matter to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) gets an A. That's according to a recent [report](#) issued by the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. A Navy veteran, Hinchey is highly ranked on veteran's issues and was a strong supporter of the pro-veteran policies that made this year a "[banner year on veterans legislation](#)," according to the American Legion.

"I am proud to have voted into law several pieces of legislation over the last two years that will benefit our nation's veterans and honor their service," said Hinchey. "I want to thank National Commander Jimmie Foster and the American Legion for their hard work and commitment in making sure Congress is responding to the needs of veterans. Working with them, Congress has enacted legislation that will make a real difference in the lives of those who have so valiantly served our nation."

As American Legion National Commander Jimmie Foster said, "the bipartisan passage of so many veterans bills by the 111th Congress certainly demonstrates its commitment to honor the sacrifices of those who have served in uniform." Over the last two years, significant legislation has been enacted that both responds to the needs of returning service men and women, and works to better honor veterans of past conflicts. Most recently, the President signed into law, on October 13th, the Veterans' Benefits Act of 2010 that would enhance veterans employment and work training opportunities, address veterans housing issues, upgrade disability, insurance and survivor programs, and also require a comprehensive study of best treatment practices for chronic multi-symptom illness in Gulf War I veterans.

In addition to the Veterans' Benefits Act, over the last two years Hinchey voted into law several top legislative priorities of veterans service organizations. In May, the President signed into law the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act, a comprehensive bill offering the caregivers of veterans training, compensation, respite care, and access to mental health counseling. In July, a law was enacted to finally compensate Vietnam veterans suffering the ill effects of exposure to the herbicide Agent Orange. In October, another "chief" piece of legislation, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009, was signed into law. These and other veterans bills passed this Congress have expanded the resources available to veterans, and begun to better address vital issues in the veterans community including mental health and housing.

"While a lot has been done, there is no doubt there is more work to do, said Hinchey. "I'm

committed to making sure we continue to improve education benefits veterans have earned, as well as making sure our brave men and women can be secure in employment. I remain committed to fulfilling our country's promises to our nation's veterans in recognition of their great sacrifices to protect our country and our freedoms."

Hinchey is the author of the Carmelo Rodriguez Military Medical Accountability Act, which would allow service members who become victims of medical malpractice at a military medical facility to hold those responsible accountable. Current law prevents malpractice lawsuits from being filed against the military regardless of the egregiousness of the situation. The bill is named after the late Sgt. Carmelo Rodriguez of Ellenville, New York, who died of skin cancer in 2007 after a series of extraordinary mistakes and misdiagnoses made by military medical personnel.

A veteran of the U.S. Navy, Hinchey served in the Pacific on the destroyer U.S.S. Marshall after graduating from high school. As a strong proponent of veterans issue on the House Appropriations Committee, Hinchey traveled to Afghanistan in December 2001 following the U.S. invasion. Last year, during the week of Thanksgiving, he visited the country for a third time to have a holiday dinner with the troops, and then made a fourth trip to the country earlier this year.

To read more about what Congress and VA have done to better serve our veterans, click [here](#) and [here](#).